# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
# LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:219
ANSWERED ON:07.08.2006
CENSUS ON BENGAL TIGERS
Mandal Shri Sanat Kumar

**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) and the Forest Department have conducted separate Census on Royal Bengal Tigers of Sundarbans;

(b) if so, the details of the outcome of the census conducted by both;

(c) whether there is a great variation between the census conducted by ISI showing figures of only 65 tigers and the forest department showing figures of 251 tigers;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) the methodology adopted by ISI and the Government of India in conducting the census on Tigers of Sundarbans; and

(f) the steps taken/being taken by the Government for protecting the Royal Bengal Tigers of Sundarbans?

## Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (SHRI A. RAJA)

(a), (b), (c), (d), (e) & (f) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

SATATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) & (f) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 219 REGARDING CENSUS ON BENGAL TIGERS DUE FOR REPLY ON 07.08.2006.

(a) to (d) As reported by the State, the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) has not conducted any census of tiger in the Sundarban Tiger Reserve. The State Forest Department alone has carried out phase-I of the refined methodology of estimating tigers, co-predators, prey animals and evaluation of their habitat, evolved through collaborative research work between Project Tiger (Ministry of Environment & Forests) and the Wildlife Institute of India, which has been approved by the Tiger Task Force.

(e) The refined methodology of estimating tigers involves sampling and estimation of tiger density in different strata using a combination of methods, i.e. camera trap, digital photography of pugmarks to fix identities by a computer based recognition technique based on a mark-capture statistical framework, and correlation with other data, eg. physical signs of tiger presence, prey-base, apart from DNA characterization of scats at places. The methodology has been approved by the Tiger Task Force constituted by National Board for Wildlife. The process is underway and its phase-I alone has been completed. The State has informed that the ISI is yet to develop its software fully for carrying out pugmark analysis for tiger estimation.

(f) Steps taken by Government of India for conservation of wild animals including Tigers is given at Annexure-I.

ANNEXURE-I

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (f) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 219 REGARDING CENSUS ON BENGAL TIGERS DUE FOR REPLY ON 07.08.2006.

Steps taken by the government for protection and conservation of tigers and other wildlife are as under:

(i) Legal protection has been provided to wild animals against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

(ii) Several rare and endangered species of wild animals have been included in the Schedules of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby giving it highest degree of protection.

(iii) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended and made more stringent. The punishment in cases of offences has been enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that has been used for committing any wild life offence.

(iv) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehended and prosecute wildlife offenders.

(v) Government of India has set up Regional and Sub-regional Offices for wildlife preservation in major export and trade centers of the country to prevent smuggling of wild animals and their products.

(vi) Financial and technical help is provided to the States under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, viz. Project Tiger, Project Elephant and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the States for providing effective protection to wild animals.

(vii) A National Wildlife Action Plan 2002-16 was adopted by the Indian Board for Wild Life under the chairmanship of Prime Minister in January 2002. The plan outlines the strategy for conservation and protection of wildlife in the country.

(viii) Government of India is a signatory to many international conventions concerning biodiversity conservation and control of illegal trade in wild flora and fauna.

(ix) Bilateral agreements have been signed with Nepal and Republic of China for controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife.

(x) A Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries has been created for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.

(xi) Action has been taken for implementing the urgent recommendation of Tiger Task Force and creation of Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau (Wildlife Crime Control Bureau).